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FILE No. *NBR* 3/548/5 (Part *W 418*)

TITLE: BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY AND PUBLIC OPINION
ON THE KURDISH SITUATION IN IRAQ.

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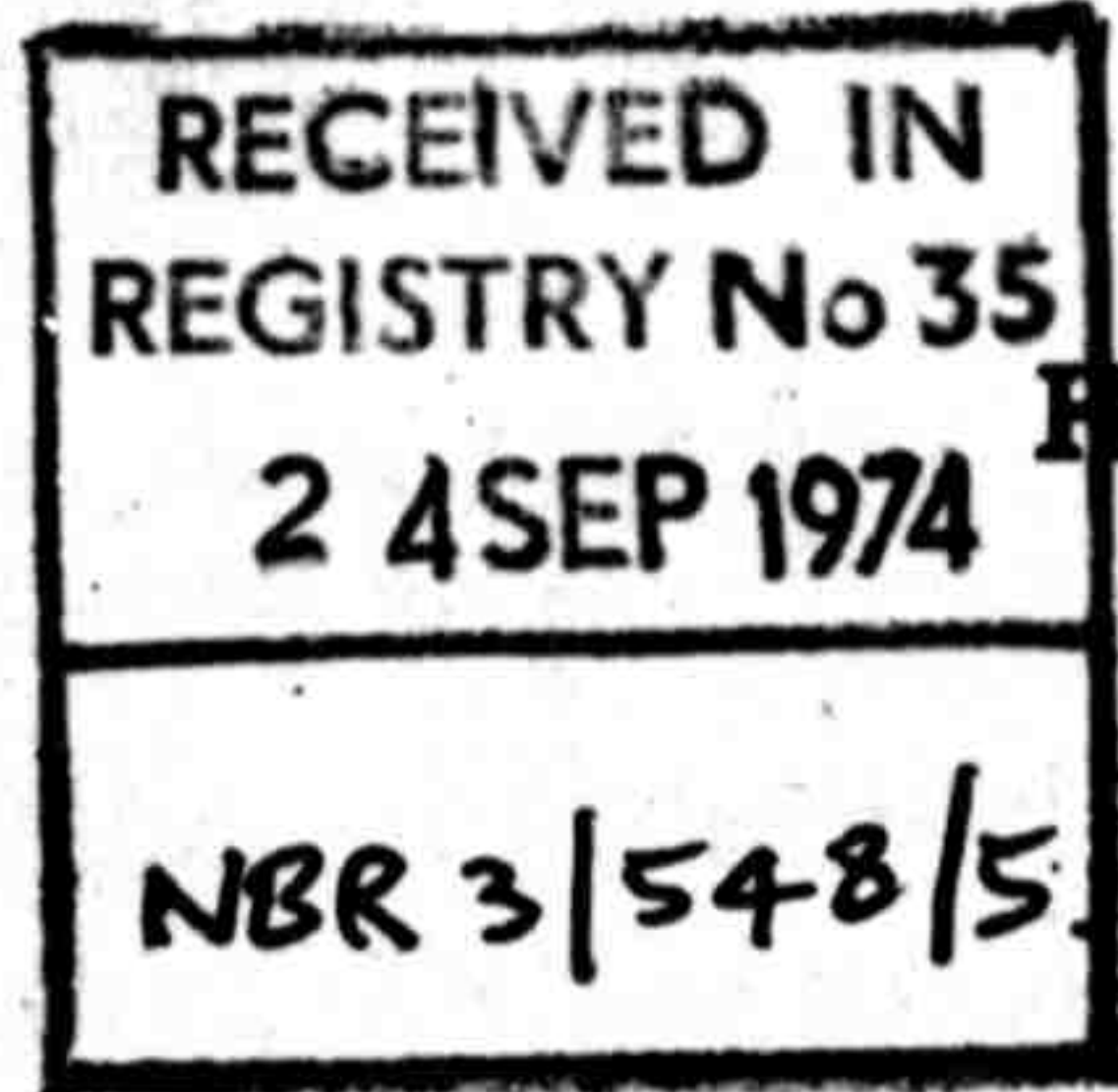
1974

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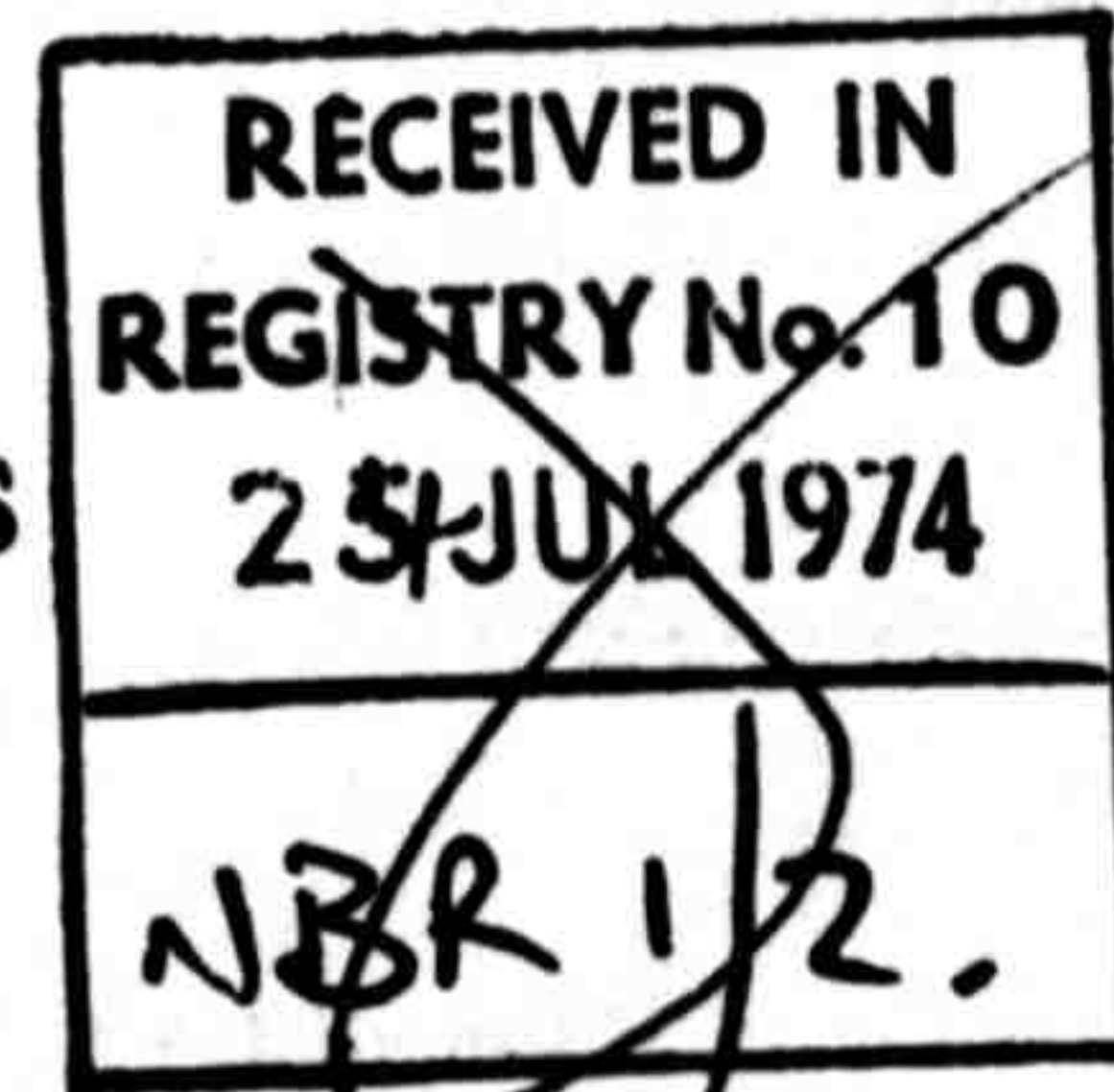
PART

R 3/548/5

FILE No.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



NB

22nd July 1974

Dear Mr. Callaghan,

I enclose a copy of a memorandum on the situation in Kurdistan in Iraq as conveyed to me by representatives of the Kurdish Democratic Party.

Can I ask whether representations have been made to the Iraqi Government by the British Government about this situation?

Yours Sincerely

Russell Johnson

1. Acknowledgement

2. Secretary of State ^{has} not seen

3. ME Department for
from Mr. Ennals

The Rt. Hon. James Callaghan, M.P.
Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs.

BKJ
23h

Reply has issued
BS 31/2.
pc.

May 74.

THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT IS ONCE MORE WAGING WAR AGAINST KURDISTAN

A. Background of the Kurdish problem

1. According to the Sevres Treaty of 1920, the Kurdish people were given the right of self-determination on an equal basis with the other peoples of the Ottoman Empire. But international interests did not allow the treaty to be implemented. In 1925, the Wilayet of Mosul, (Kurdistan), was annexed to Iraq under British Mandate. Britain pledged to the League of Nations that she would ensure that the Kurds enjoyed their national rights - this having been made a condition for the annexation. Ever since then, the people of Kurdistan have struggled by all possible means to enjoy their national rights, aiming for autonomy within a democratic government, throughout the present revolution.
2. The present Kurdish revolution started on 11th September, 1961, when the military dictatorship unleashed war upon the Kurdish National Movement led by the Kurdistan Democratic Party and its President, General Mustafa Barzani. Since then, 5 regimes and 9 governments have fallen - none of them having been elected in the first place - on the contrary, they were military, personal or factional dictatorships, and they followed each other in trying to solve the Kurdish question by sheer force. It is obvious that there cannot be any stability in Iraq, unless this problem is solved peacefully and democratically.
3. In 1970 the Baathist regime were weak and knew after a series of lost battles with the Kurdish revolutionaries that they would not remain in power very much longer if they continued the fight. So they started negotiations with the Kurdistan Democratic Party. Having the interests of the people at heart, the K.D.P. entered these negotiations despite its doubts as to the good will, which the Baathists showed at that time. And so the famous agreement of 11th March, 1970, was signed, according to which the Iraqi Government recognized autonomy for Kurdistan, promising to fulfill its implementation within a maximum period of 4 years, and to establish a National Assembly in Baghdad, where Iraqi people - Kurds and Arabs alike - would be represented. The agreement also included the Kurdish people's right to be represented proportionately within the Central Government.
4. Only a few months after the agreement of 11th March, 1970, the Baathist regime started conspiracies and intrigues against the Kurdish Movement. An organized policy of Arabization of the rich oil districts of Kurdistan took place, especially in Kirkuk, Khanikeen and Singar. They tried to split the Kurdish Movement and K.D.P. money was lavishly spent on mercenaries and

anybody, who showed willing to oppose the Kurdish Movement. Members of the K.D.P. were tortured to death in the "Palace of End" and other prisons. Many attempts were made to assassinate K.D.P. leaders, including two assassination attempts upon General Barzani's person. It soon became evident that the Baathist regime were trying to achieve by conspiracies what they had failed to achieve by military means, i.e., the destruction of the Kurdish Movement. Naturally, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and its President, General Barzani, resisted these mean intrigues and the Baghdad regime achieved very little.

5. Having failed in their conspiracies, yet feeling stronger than before, due to having crushed the Arab opposition parties and groups as well as in view of the new, huge oil revenues and large quantities of extra modern arms in stock, they decided to renew the fight against the Kurdish people. But this time under the banner of implementing the law of autonomy in Kurdistan.

6. This law of autonomy, which they devised, is not autonomy, but a kind of decentralization of the administration. Besides, it demands of our people that they give up one third of their land - especially the rich oil areas, Kirkuk, Khanikeen and Zaman, which the Baathist regime insist should not be included in the so-called autonomous area.

Contrary to the agreement of 11th March, 1970, this infamous law does not mention the participation of the people of Kurdistan in the Central Government. Of course the K.D.P. rejected this law and Kurdish Ministers, Governors and many hundreds of officials resigned their posts in protest.

Immediately after declaring this law on 11th March, 1974, the Baghdad regime renewed its war against Kurdistan.

B. Who is with the Baathist Government and who is with the Kurdish Revolution.

1. The Baathists are known for their animosity towards all political parties, groups and personalities in Iraq.

As a matter of fact, leaders and members of all parties and groups have either been assassinated, hanged or tortured to death in Baathist prisons. Dissident leaders of the Baath Party itself, including more than half the members of R.O.C., have been killed, imprisoned or banished.

It goes without saying that there are neither democratic nor individual liberties in existence.

All the democratic, nationalist and liberal parties and groups are against the Baathist dictatorship, but the most ruthless methods are used against them. So they are unable to work openly. As a matter of fact, anyone who is not a Baathist, is

anti-Baath, except for the pro-Moscow faction of the Communist Party. Since renewal of the Baath dictatorship's hostilities against Kurdistan, the opposition parties are in high hopes of ridding themselves of this regime in the near future.

2. The Baath regime in Baghdad is very famous for its bad relations with the neighbouring countries - without exception. They are at logger heads with Iran and Syria; they continually interfere in the internal affairs of Kuwait, for which they have far reaching plans. They have declared themselves many a time to be against Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Even Egypt has declared that Iraq is working actively against it. The Baathist regime has carried out gangsterism - not only in its own country - but also in Egypt and Pakistan. However, the Soviet Block supports the Baathist regime very actively, in every field.

3. When the Baath Government renewed the war against our people in Kurdistan, the whole Kurdish people stood firm behind its leadership - the Kurdistan Democratic Party and its President, General Barzani. About 100,000 people left the towns and went to the liberated area, which is administered by the Kurdish Revolution. These included 4,000 teachers, 5,000 policemen and police officers, 10,000 Secondary School and University students and many thousands of soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers. Among the new revolutionaries were about 100 doctors, 300 engineers, many directors and governors, in fact, people from all walks of life came to the liberated land, preferring the hardship and the catastrophes of war to living under Baathist tutelage and torture. Their prime motive was patriotism.

C. The present state of the war

1. The Baathist dictatorship deployed the bulk of the Iraqi army in Kurdistan, including 4 infantry divisions, and 4 armoured divisions. The war planes, which include Mig 17, Mig 19, Mig 21 - Sukhoi 7, Bajar and the Topolaiy 22, are stationed in the vicinity of the battle fields, at Kirkuk, Mosul and Arbil. The Baathists have also imported internationally prohibited gases and are buying Laser Rays and many other lethal arms to be used against the Kurdish civilian population.

2. Due to heavy rains between 11th March and 15th April, 1974, the fighting took the form of skirmishes, but the blood-thirsty Baathists then started their all out war on the Kurdish people, during mid-April.

3. Headed by the experienced General Barzani the Kurdish partisan army, Pashmerga, took up defensive positions all over Kurdistan, thus forcing the Iraqi army to withdraw from most of

the mountainous towns. Most of the fighting is going on in the hills around the main roads from Kirkuk to Salaimania - from Kirkuk to Rawanduz via Arbil and from Mosul to Zakho, on the Turkish border. Government losses in the ground fighting are heavy. They have been unable to make any headway or successful penetration. On the contrary - their morale is very low and their soldiers feel they are fighting an unjust and lost battle. The Peshmerga are defending their fatherland, homes and families with unsurpassed high spirits and morale. They know very well that it will be the end of the Kurdish National Movement and, indeed the Kurdish people, if they don't succeed. Within one month the Peshmerga have destroyed 50 tanks and 30 armoured cars; they have shot down 4 aeroplanes and 4 armoured helicopters. In occupying army positions, they captured a great deal of arms.

4. In reprisal, the Baathist racial dictatorship is waging a genocide war against the Kurdish people. They are using their modern war 'planes to heavily bombard towns and villages from very high altitudes. They mostly use incendiary (Napalm) bombs against the civilian population.

Here is a list of some of their atrocities committed against the Kurdish population:

- On 24th April, 1974, they bombed the town of Qala Diza, which has a population of 20,000. 131 citizens were killed and over 300 injured. The martyrs were mainly women and children, including students and primary school pupils, since the two schools were deliberately bombed.
- On 28th April, the town Halbja was bombed and over 100 houses were destroyed. 42 people were killed and over 100 injured. The inhabitants had to evacuate the town and took refuge in the mountains.
- Zakho, a town with a population of 25,000 was bombed and shelled between 21st and 30th April, this year. During these ten days the town was burning. On 1st May, the Iraqi army entered the town and indiscriminately shot at everybody within view. 65 persons were killed and over 150 injured - again - mostly women and children.
- On 16th April, A , with a population of 7,000 was shelled heavily. Many houses, churches and mosques were destroyed over the bodies of their inhabitants.
- Between 23rd and 27th of April, 1974, the area of Balak was bombed, including Gallala, with a population of 5,000. 40 people were killed and 51 injured.
- The towns of Diana, Amadia, Bomarne, Mangaish and Heran are among the towns which are under heavy bombardment.
- Dahok - population 40,000 - was shelled on 25th and 26th April. Many people were killed and injured.

- The number of villages bombed already exceeds 150.
- On 14th April, 11 Kurdish patriots were hanged in Arbil, after having been sentenced to death and tortured in Baghdad. Indeed, some of them had had their hands cut off for their eyes gouged out. However, under the gallows they cried: " Long live Kurdistan - long live Barzani" !
- On 30th April, 5 Kurdish university students, who were at the College of Literature in Baghdad, were sentenced to death. One of them is a girl - Layla Kassou.

All these atrocities and many others have been committed by the Baathists within one month. So one can imagine what lies ahead of us. However, one thing is certain and that is that exactly this fight and these atrocities will bring about the end of the Baathist regime in Baghdad. For since 1961, there has not been one regime that fought the Kurdish people for longer than 15 months and this fact the Baathist leading faction knows only too well.

About one and a half million people live in the liberated area of Kurdistan. They exist under the terrible conditions of war - most of them being displaced persons. Not a day passes without bombing, not a day passes without new martyrs. The Iraqi Government have placed Kurdistan under a tight economic blockade. In addition to the thousands of injured people there are thousands more, who are sick and unable to obtain medicine or hospital treatment.

Now the question we would put before every leader - indeed - before every conscientious man or woman in the free world is this:

Should the Kurdish people be left to their fate and to extinction by the Baathist racial dictatorship or should they be helped to survive ?

There are many ways and means by which the people of Kurdistan can be helped and rescued. Foremost and apart from moral support from informed world public opinion is the urgent need for humanitarian and financial aid.

M.M. Abdul Rahman

M. Dizayee

Members of the Political Bureau of the
Kurdistan Democratic Party

and

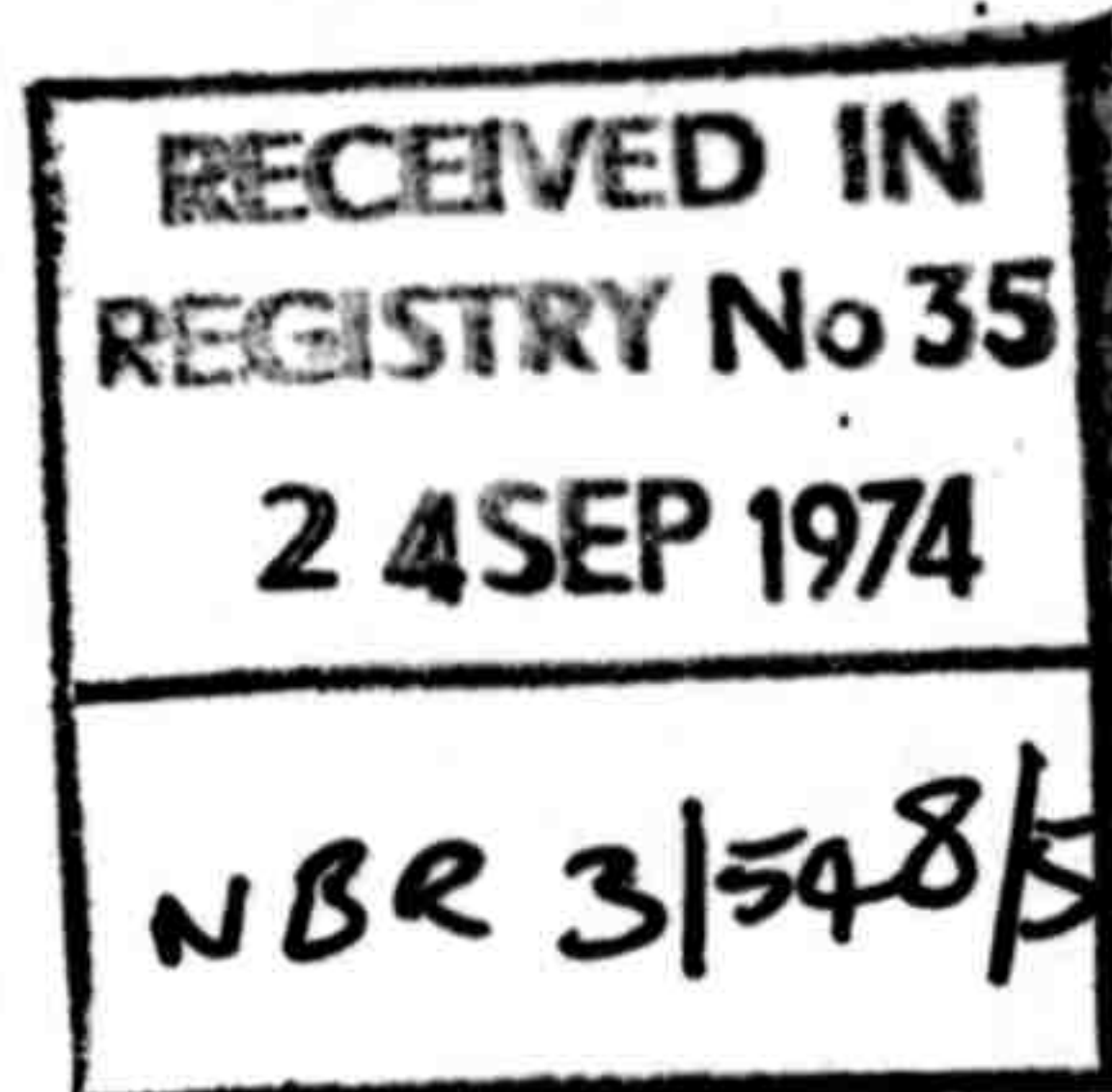


Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

29 July, 1974

From The Minister of State
The Rt. Hon. David Ennals, MP.



[Handwritten signature]

Mr. [unclear] [unclear] 31/7

(1) The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has asked me to reply to your letter of 22 July on the situation in Kurdistan and to let you have back the memorandum on the situation which you kindly sent with it.

No representations have been made by the British Government to the Government of Iraq about this situation. As I am sure you will understand, we have to bear in mind that we have no proper locus standi to intervene on behalf of the Kurdish community in Iraq who are, I understand, Iraqi citizens.

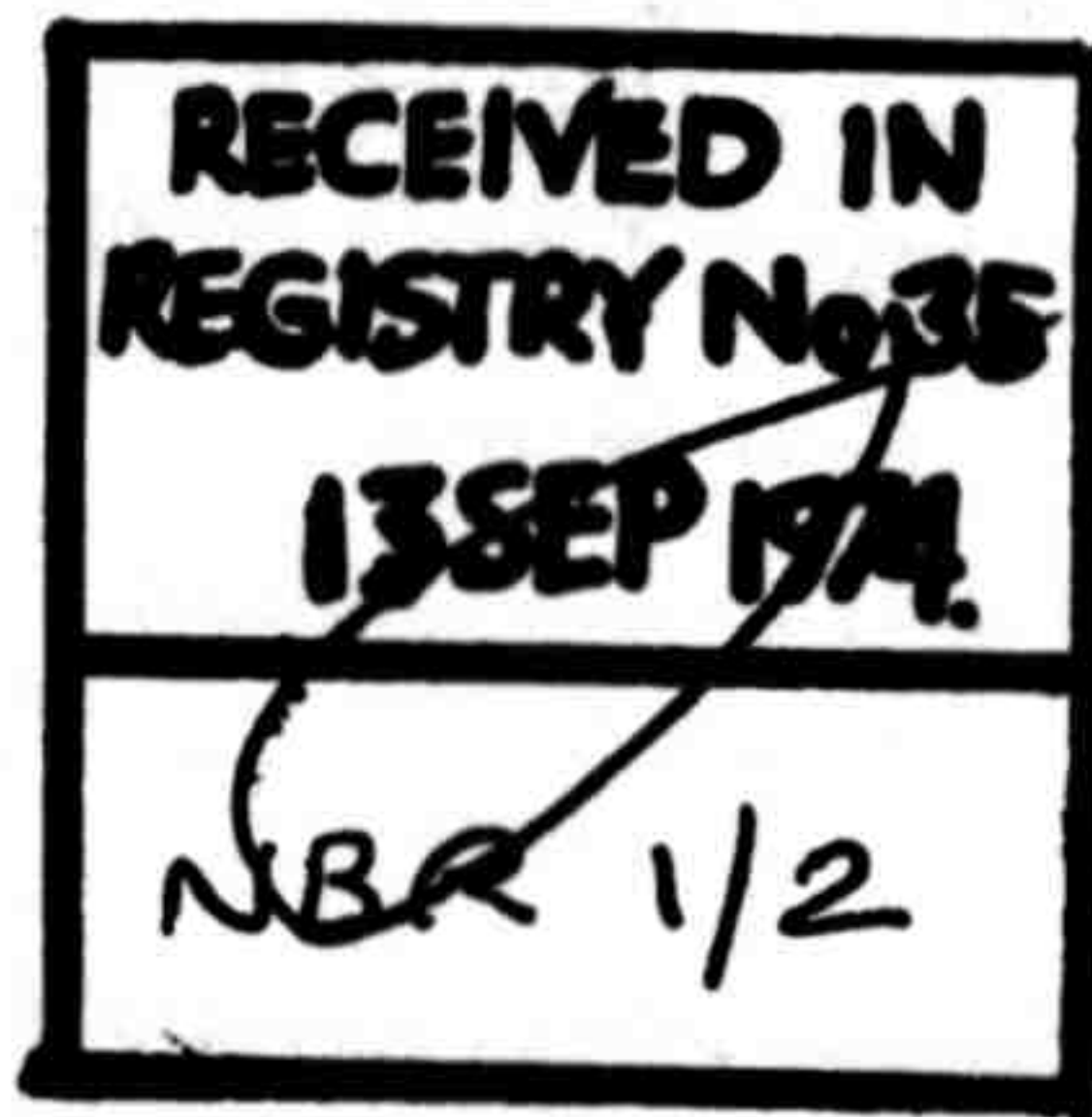
DESPATCHED BY
MINISTER OF STATE

Russell Johnston, Esq., MP.,
House of Commons,
LONDON, SW1.



1. Acknowledged 12/9
2. Minister of State has/has not seen
3. NE Department for
Draft reply from... ..

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



10th September 1974

Draft
13/9

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter about the position of the Kurds in Iraq.

You say that the British Government has no locus in the matter and that in consequence no representations can be made to the Iraqi Government.

I am afraid I do not understand the logic of the situation when we can regularly make representations about internal situations in a number of countries, such as South Africa, the USSR, Greece, South Vietnam, the DDR, etc.

Surely if the FCO has evidence that injustice is being done somewhere Britain ought to raise her voice against it?

Yours sincerely,

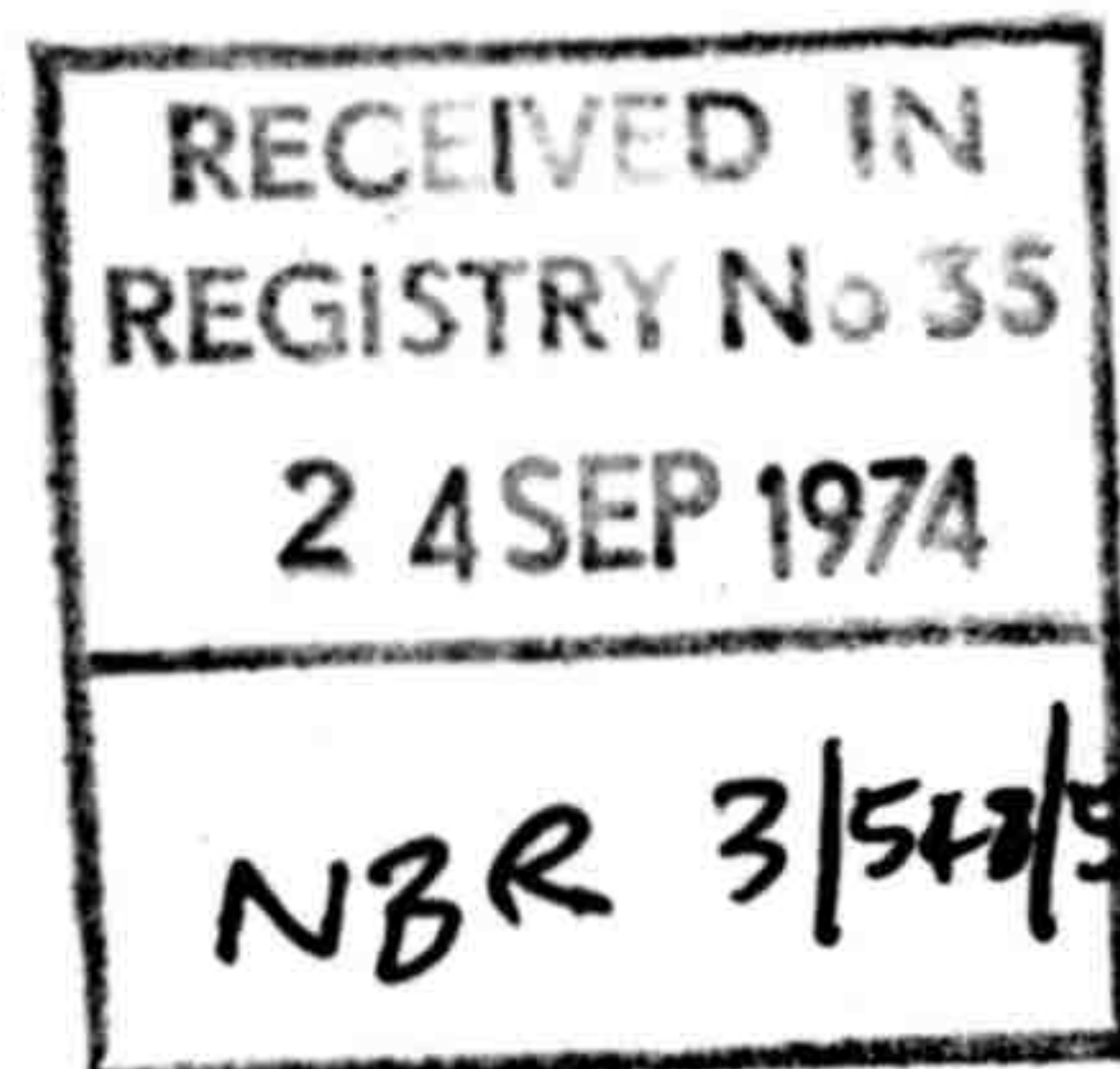
P.P. Russell

dictated by Mr. Johnston
and signed in his absence

The Rt. Hon. David Ennals, M.P.,
Minister of State,
Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

Mr Weir

Mr Coles



Superseded

See redraft submitted

On 18/9

pu. B. 1/1

THE KURDS IN IRAQ

Problem

1. Mr Russell Johnston MP (Liberal - Inverness) has written to the Minister of State commenting that the statement that HMG have no locus standi to make representations on the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan to the Iraq Government is inconsistent with the "representations" made regularly to other Governments. How should the Minister of State reply?

Background and Argument

2. Mr Russell Johnston wrote to the Secretary of State on 22 July asking whether we had made representations to the Iraq Government about the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and enclosed a memorandum on that situation by representatives of the Kurdish Democratic Party. Mr Ennals replied on 29 July explaining that HMG had no locus standi to make representations to foreign governments about questions concerning their own citizens.

A | 3. In challenging this statement, Mr Russell Johnston is partly in the right, though he confuses [to some extent] formal representations on a government-to-government basis and informal approaches. HMG recognise that they have no locus standi to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries. ~~Strictly speaking, we do not make formal representations on a government-to-government basis about such matters. But on rare occasions we do make our views known to the governments concerned, in circumstances where there is definite evidence of injustice or a British connexion and where we are convinced that it would not be counter-productive to the interests of those concerned to do so. We have acted in this way in some of the countries mentioned by Mr Johnston.~~

4. Any approach on the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan would be deeply resented by the Iraq Government. The Kurdish

/problem

problem now involves the Iraqi Army and the Kurdish "Pesh Merga" in open warfare on a large scale. The situation is one on which the Iraq Government will now be even more sensitive than ever. They have in fact already made representations to us in July about the political activities of Kurds in London. Any enquiry or expression of concern by us to them, however formulated, would inevitably arouse extreme hostility and put at risk the potentially very rewarding relationship which we are just beginning to build up since resuming diplomatic relations in April. In this situation, I am convinced that it would be most inadvisable to make any approach to the Iraq Government.

5. The line that we have no locus standi in such situations to make representations to foreign governments is one that we have consistently taken in response to Parliamentary Questions on the Jewish community in Iraq. In view of the further examples quoted by Mr Johnston, I have added to the draft reply a further explanation to avoid any charge of inconsistency.

Recommendation

6. I recommend that the Minister of State should reply to Mr Russell Johnston in the terms of the attached draft.

7. EESD, SEED, WED, NENAD and CSAD agree.

P R H Wright
Middle East Department

17 September 1974

cc Mr Craig, NENAD
Mr Bullard, EESD ✓
Mr Goodison, SEED
Mr James, WED
Mr Foster, CSAD

Registry
No.

DRAFT LETTER

Type 1 +

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret.
Secret.
Confidential.
Restricted.
Unclassified.

To:-

Mr Russell Johnston MP
House of Commons

FROM

Minister of State

Telephone No. Ext.

Department

PRIVACY MARKING

..... In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 10 September in reply to mine of 29 July which explained my view that it would not be appropriate for the Government to make representations on the situation of the Kurds in Iraq.

I think we need to be clear about the distinction between official representations to other Governments about the internal situation in their countries [and raising our voice in cases where we have clear and irrefutable evidence of injustice [from our own sources] ^{have reason to believe} and where we ^{think} are ^{either} convinced] that/speaking out in public or an informal private approach would be really helpful to those concerned. 2)

I do not believe that [this particular situation is one that we could raise informally in any useful way.] This does not imply that there is any difference in principle in our attitude to injustice in the various countries, but our relationship with them and the possibilities of exerting influence and helping those concerned vary from one country to another. These are facts which our policies necessarily have to reflect.

/I hope

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

or speaking out
in public

I hope that you will not think I am being unhelpful in pointing out that in the case of Iraq the facts are that we have no proper basis for representations on the Kurds and that in general there are limits to what we can do about the internal situation in other countries.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

File ⑤



Mr Craig, NENAD
Mr Bullard, EESD
Mr Goodison, SEED
Mr James, WED
Mr Foster, CSAD
Mr Thomas, SWED

separate copies

THE KURDS IN IRAQ

You will have seen my submission of 17 September covering a draft reply on the question of representations from the Minister of State. In the light of subsequent comments from EESD I have amended the submission and draft letter and now circulate a revised version on which your Departments have been consulted.

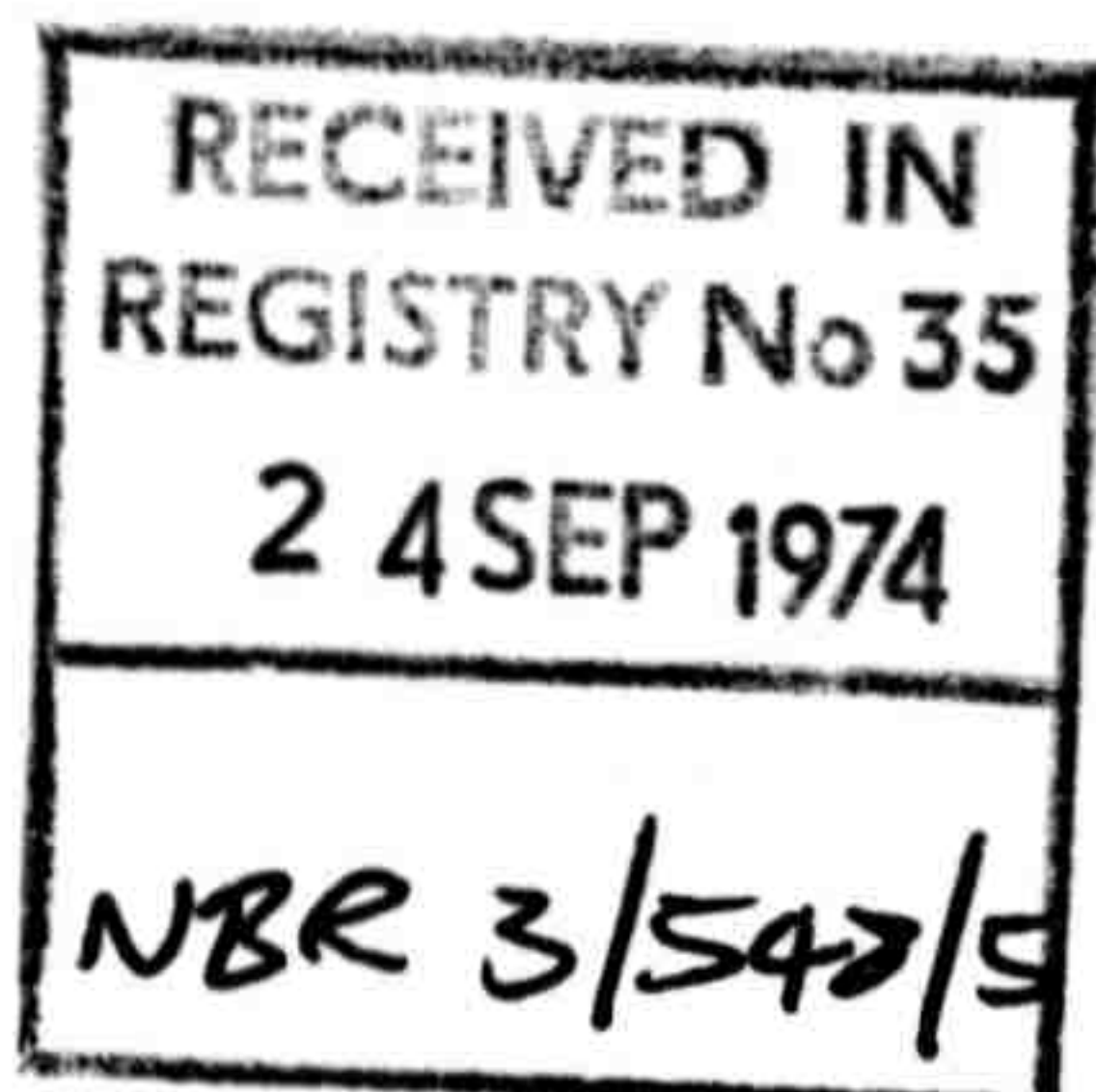
P R H Wright
Middle East Department

18 September 1974

Mr Veir

mon 1/19

Mr Coles



Letter has arrived

R and pa
18²³/9

THE KURDS IN IRAQ

Problem

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- C replied on 29 July explaining that HMG had no locus standi to make representations to foreign governments about questions concerning their own citizens.
3. In challenging this statement, Mr Russell Johnston is partly in the right, though he confuses formal representations on a government-to-government basis and informal approaches. HMG recognise that they have no locus standi to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries. But on rare occasions we do make our views known to governments, in circumstances where, for instance, we can justifiably draw to the attention of the Government concerned the strength of feeling in the UK about certain of their domestic policies; and the damage that this might consequently do to our relations. A further precondition for action of this kind is that it should stand a chance of doing some good and not be counter-productive. And as Mr Wilson said in the House of Commons on 13 June "... these cases can sometimes be dealt with better in private discussions than in public declaration". We have acted in this way in some of the countries mentioned by Mr Johnston.
4. Any approach on the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan would be deeply resented by the Iraq Government. The Kurdish

/problem

problem now involves the Iraqi Army and the Kurdish "Pesh Merga" in open warfare on a large scale. The situation is one on which the Iraq Government will now be even more sensitive than ever. They have in fact already made representations to us in July about the political activities of Kurds in London. Any enquiry or expression of concern by us to them, however formulated, would inevitably arouse extreme hostility and put at risk the potentially very rewarding relationship which we are just beginning to build up since resuming diplomatic relations in April. In this situation, I am convinced that it would be most inadvisable to make any approach to the Iraq Government.

5. The line that we have no locus standi in such situations to make representations to foreign governments is one that we have consistently taken in response to Parliamentary Questions on the Jewish community in Iraq. In view of the further examples quoted by Mr Johnston, I have added to the draft reply a further explanation to avoid any charge of inconsistency.

Recommendation

6. I recommend that the Minister of State should reply to Mr Russell Johnston in the terms of the attached draft.

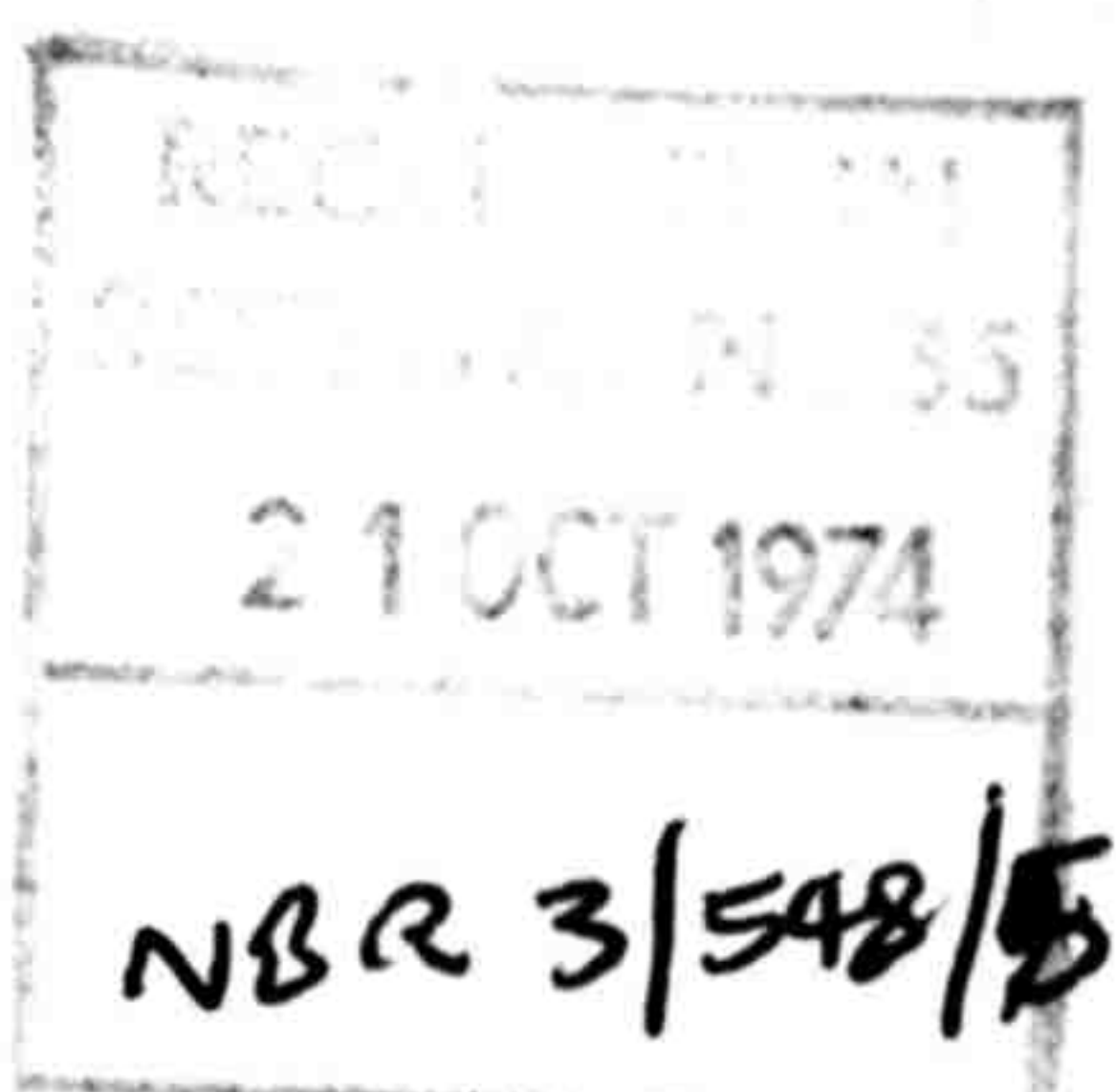
7. EESD, SEED, SWED, WED, NENAD and CSAD agree.



P R H Wright
Middle East Department

18 September 1974

cc Mr Craig, NENAD
Mr Bullard, EESD
Mr Goodison, SEED
Mr James, WED
Mr Foster, CSAD
Mr Thomas, SWED



From The Minister of State
The Rt Hon David Ennals

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

20 September 1974

Enter.

CC : li Meyer EESD
li he Borton WED
li Ford CSAD
li Richardson NGNAD
li Cornish SEED
li Everett QWED

23/9.

then per.

3

23/9

LAST PAPER

② Thank you for your letter of 10 September in reply to mine of 29 July which explained my view that it would not be appropriate for the Government to make representations on the situation of the Kurds in Iraq.

As this and previous Governments have made plain on a number of occasions, HMG have no formal standing to intercede on behalf of citizens of other countries. But where strength of public feeling in the UK about the domestic policies of another country is such that there is a risk that damage might be done to our relations with the country concerned, we are sometimes prepared to draw this fact to the attention of the Government in question. We do of course only take this step when we believe that it would do some good; that it would not be rejected out of hand as an unwarranted interference in internal affairs; and it would not be counter-productive. You will understand if I say that it is for the Government to decide when these criteria have been fulfilled; and how they choose to act. We stand in different relation to different countries and the possibilities of exerting influence

/vary

Russell Johnston Esq
House of Commons
LONDON SW1A 0AA



vary accordingly. These are facts which our policies necessarily have to reflect. But this does not imply that there is any difference of principle in our attitude to violations of human rights in different countries.

In the case of the Kurds and the Iraqi Government, not only do we have no formal standing to intercede; but we also do not consider that an approach of the kind I have described above would be effective or helpful to those concerned.

**DESPATCHED BY
MINISTER OF STATE**

British Attitudes Towards The Situation Of Kurds In Iraq. Opinion Of UK Parliament And Public On Situation Of Kurds In Iraq. 22 July 1974. MS Middle East Online: Iraq, 1914-1974: Selected files from series AIR, CAB, CO, FCO, FO, PREM, T, WO, The National Archives, Kew, UK FCO 8/2318. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107472827/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=1c9bea0c&pg=1. Accessed 11 Apr. 2022.